

47 RONIN
By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



47 Ronin is a beautifully rendered, ancient Samurai story. Keanu Reeves proves again that he is the one to turn to when you need a tough fighter. The tale is of the battle between kingdoms; the treachery of one ruler to take over the kingdom of another and the brave warriors who stood up to the ruler and regained their honor. Embedded in this web of intrigue is Kai, played by Reeves with his trademark style which fits the period and the culture here. Kai is an orphaned outcast who naturally falls for the daughter of the good ruler and does all he can to win battles as he wins her heart. Enduring love over lifetimes is the flame that keeps *47 Ronin* going.

This movie pays homage to those wonderful Japanese films starring Toshiro Mifune. I grew up watching those films and so I enjoyed this story as much for the beautiful settings, costumes and story as for the ability to immerse myself into another time and place for a few hours. The code of honor that must be upheld by the samurai is not easy to imagine. Being subject to the decrees of emperors with no choice of who to love or marry still amazes me. It also makes me glad that I live in more modern times and in a place where choice is protected, albeit still limited by socioeconomic factors, birth circumstances and the society where we live.

47 Ronin has some flaws considering what can be done with computer-generated images, they came up a little short in places but even that seems appropriate somehow. This movie is about friendship, loyalty, honor, commitment, courage and a code of behavior that surpasses any military training today. To live and to die with honor, to serve and protect with dignity, to put your life on the line to serve the ruling class are all concepts we support today. But few would do what the samurai did to honor the code they lived by.

The love story is simply complicated and very typical of the genre. Lovers separated by class and birth are familiar themes in classic Japanese films. As if that were not enough, a beautiful but deadly witch stirs things up with her evil magic in an effort to destroy the Ronin and control the kingdom by ensuring its ruler is under her spells. There is a lot going on in *47 Ronin* and the movie is a good choice for fathers and sons and moms and daughters to enjoy.

I give *47 Ronin* three samurai. You can still find it at the discount movie theaters.

